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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2527
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 000230

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR EAP/MTS AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [KTIP](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: MALAYSIA'S WOMEN'S MINISTRY PROVIDES TIP UPDATE

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 102 - MALAYSIA 2009 TIP REPORT

[1](#)B. 08 KL 1073 - GOM SEEKS USG TIP EXPERTISE

[1](#)C. 08 KL 1017 - INTERIM TIP ASSESSMENT

[1](#)D. 08 KL 495 - BURMESE ALLEGE TRAFFICKING AT BORDER

[1](#)E. 08 KL 448 - AMBASSADOR MEETS WOMEN'S MINISTER

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Director General (DG) Noorul Ainur from the Women's Ministry briefed the Embassy on March 20 about recent Ministry efforts to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). The DG described progress in working with local NGOs and initiating a nascent TIP awareness program, and also provided some budgetary information. Poloff raised ongoing concerns about the Government of Malaysia's (GOM) response to labor trafficking and credible reports of Immigration officials participating in the trafficking of Burmese refugees.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Comment: We have come a long way since the Women's Ministry (and other GOM offices) severed substantive contact on TIP issues with the Embassy in the wake of the 2007 Tier 3 ranking, which left us without access during the critical launching period of Malaysia's anti-TIP law. Post's relationship with the Women's Ministry has dramatically improved over the past year, allowing for frank discussions on TIP and for U.S. recommendations to be heard. As the DG was quick to admit, the Ministry could benefit greatly from technical expertise on such topics as providing social services to TIP victims and conducting a national level TIP awareness program. End Summary and Comment.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Noorul Ainur, DG of the Department for the Development of Women in the Women's Ministry, initiated a March 20 briefing for the Embassy to discuss the Ministry's recent efforts to combat TIP. As the DG explained, the Ministry is reaching out to local NGOs, starting with the Women's Aid Organization (WAO), which operates a women's shelter and specializes in domestic violence. WAO provided trainers for a three-day workshop for 20 Women's Ministry protection officers on the "Handling of Traumatized Victims." (Note: Protection officers are ministry officers tasked with assisting and interviewing suspected and identified TIP victims. End note.) Noorul described the Ministry's initial steps in a TIP awareness program, which currently features an information brochure available in English and Malay. The Ministry plans future editions printed in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. Noorul explained that the Ministry had distributed the brochures via local NGOs. Poloff suggested that such materials also be distributed at ports of entry, including airports, and that the Ministry expand its efforts through other media. (Note: Both the Ministry's outreach to NGOs and initiation of public awareness efforts reflect specific recommendations we provided to her in late 2008 based on the U.S. "action plan." End Note.)

[1](#)4. (SBU) In response to our request for budget figures related to TIP, Noorul explained that the Department of Women's Development spent almost 2.4 million ringgit (about USD 650,000 USD) to renovate the Ministry's adult TIP

victims' shelter in Kuala Lumpur and the new shelter in the East Malaysian state of Sabah. The annual operating budget, covering staff salaries and utilities, is about 783,000 ringgit (212,000 USD) for each shelter. Currently, the Ministry operates three shelters and is planning to open several more, including one in Johor state.

15. (SBU) Poloff acknowledged the Women's Ministry's positive and concrete measures since passage of the comprehensive TIP law. In addition, we highlighted critical areas that remain to be addressed in Malaysia's anti-trafficking effort. Poloff noted the serious concerns the international community and USG have about the extent of alleged labor trafficking within Malaysia (ref A). We also raised the issue of providing protection for adult male TIP victims, since existing and planned shelters are intended only for women and children. Poloff emphasized that both the international community and the U.S. government were concerned about the credible reports of Immigration officials' involvement in trafficking Burmese refugees and were closely monitoring the GOM's response to the allegations (ref D).

KEITH